OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS THAT IMPEDE SPEAKING FOR

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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Abstract

Anxiety is defined by Spielberger (1983) as a "subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of autonomic nervous system" (p. 15). It is this feeling of panic and fear that may be the factor that impedes English language learners from communicating correctly in their target language. There are other aspects that, together with fear, interfere with the oral communicative skills of English students. This thesis investigates the possible reasons why Mexican students of English claim to know how to write, read, and understand English but they can not speak it.

Foreign language anxiety is a concept not known to many, but that researchers have been studying for decades. Anxiety can play a negative role in ELLs; however, there are easy ideas that can be adopted in the everyday classroom in order to increase students' talking time, self-esteem, and motivation while decreasing student's anxiety at the same time.

This work includes a series of lesson plans with some of those ideas. The ideas suggested are not difficult to implement in a class, on the very contrary, they are easy to incorporate, for example: have students read the instructions as opposed to the teacher always doing it. The lesson plans are examples of how a topic can be adapted to the needs of students.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction

The affective filter hypothesis suggested by Krashen (1982) captures the relationship between affective variables, such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety, and the process of second language acquisition. These affective variables, unfortunately, are not the only ones, as age and economic privileges can also be included in the list. ELLs have different abilities and needs that should ideally be met in a classroom. Conventional and unimaginative activities that do not increase students' motivation should be avoided. Given these problems, which inhibit a student from speaking English, I feel the need to investigate what other people from all over the world are doing to help their students overcome such obstacles. The result of this exploration is a series of lesson plans and activities that aspire to increase students' motivation, self-confidence, and serenity to improve their ability to speak English.

"Do you speak English?" is a question that English language learners (ELLs) have to answer on numerous occasions. They may have to answer that question either in a formal or in an informal setting. They might even have to answer it in a real or imaginary situation, as part of a role-play inside a classroom. No matter the place or circumstance, many ELLs may answer affirmatively, always emphasizing that they can read, write, understand, but often panic when they have to speak. I have witnessed this speaking fear in my 20 years of teaching English. Sometimes this anxiety can cause students to freeze, panic, or cry in front of their classmates. Anxiety is real and one of the most prominent causes that influence language learning negatively (Gardner, 1985). My former students have confirmed that they believe speaking is their weakest foreign language skill, due to fear of making a mistake, not knowing the correct word and

pronunciation. Teachers and students alike may recognize that this is an issue, but unfortunately, there is little focus on changing the situation.

There is little focus on student-centered classes aimed at teaching practical oral communication. Many classes for ELLs have traditionally focused on grammar and verb tenses. However, this does not always help learners to speak naturally. Long-established English courses in Mexico normally involve a large number of students who have different levels of language competence, but planning does not accommodate them; on the contrary, students need to fit into one, single cookie-cutter lesson plan. Consequently, students start losing motivation. Without either a strong mandate to teach speaking skills or student motivation, it can be hard to aid students in progressing with this skill.

Motivation is, without question, the most complex and challenging issue faced by English language teachers today (Scheidecker& Freeman, 1999). Teachers need to help students find an incentive to speak, whether it is travel plans, interactions with English speakers, or business opportunities. Once students find a reason, they will be more driven to learn English. Furthermore, it is important to provide more speaking opportunities, diminish fear, and increase motivation for students who do not have many economic advantages.

Motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety can be considered issues that interfere with students' ability to speak, but they are not the only concerns. In the early acquisition of native or non-native speech, infants and young children have the opportunity to imitate articulatory gestures and practice language sounds by cooing and babbling. Conversely, older children and adults rely on advanced stages of cognitive development, including concrete and formal operations that intertwine with the later development of mechanisms governing explicit knowledge (Westermann et al., 2007). In essence, adult learners use explicit rules to learn L2

phonemes. The implications of this idea may explain why children's pronunciation seems to be better than that of adults. I have primarily taught adults in Mexico. They often complain that they may already be too old to speak English without an accent. They have been exposed to this theory for so long that they truly believe there is no hope for them to speak English. This constant discourse just negatively impacts ELLs' motivation.

As a result, I have created a project that is a series of lesson plans aimed at overcoming the aforementioned barriers. I mentioned that traditional planning is not student-centered; hence, the research-generated project includes suggestions to help and motivate learners to increase their participation in class. These ideas are as easy as asking students to read the instructions, instead of the teacher doing it all the time. By adopting simple ideas like this, STT quickly rises. The lesson plans that I have gathered have been adapted from other teachers' plans, since there is not much documentation on studies carried out in Latin America, or more specifically in Mexico. This series of lesson plans aims to benefit teachers who do not think it is possible to replicate a real situation inside a classroom and students who need to start speaking English while finding themselves somehow immersed in the language. These lesson plans work toward helping teachers see that it is possible to increase ELLs' speaking competence by changing simple elements in their classes. The idea of these lesson plans is to incorporate mini-lessons or activities that can be used by everyone. Based on the experts' ideas, tasks that do not require teachers to prepare a lot of material beforehand have been favored. As a teacher myself, I have witnessed that planning classes is extremely time consuming. The purpose of the project is to show teachers that planning meaningful speaking activities should not be difficult.

When teachers first try something new, they tend to think it is troublesome. There are some strategies that might sound demanding. Differentiation, for example, is one of them.

However, it is important to recognize ELLs' English levels, skills, and knowledge and use them to help them speak. By differentiating the student body in this manner, ELLs with dissimilar competences can focus on their individual strengths and weaknesses. But most importantly, my project aims at helping students speak, especially without fear, with self-confidence, and with a high level of motivation, whether it is intrinsic or extrinsic. The ultimate goal is to bridge the gap between those who can communicate in English and those who think that a particular skill has been denied to them. The goal is to balance the level of competence in the four skills: writing, listening, reading, and speaking. The ultimate goal is to change the typical "I-don't-speak-English" answer into a resounding "Yes" when someone asks the question: "Do you speak English?"

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The fast-growing necessity for good English language communication skills has created a huge demand (Ahmed et al., 2017; Mahmoodzadeh, 2012). Qi (2016) mentioned that English has become a required subject and is gradually being introduced even earlier into the curricula in many schools. This points to the official importance of English in both education and society. However, although it is a compulsory subject, there are fewer English lessons provided to students than other subjects. One of the aspects of learning English for speakers of other languages has been to develop a good communicative ability. In fact, since leaning to speak a second or foreign language can change a person's life, ELLs probably tend to perceive their speaking ability as an important criterion for success. Therefore, ELLs may attempt to pursue it more seriously than other aspects of foreign language learning. However, learning a second or foreign requires affective variables or barriers, which may include inhibition, attitudes, motivation level and degree of self-esteem or self-confidence (Ahmed et al., 2017; Mahmoodzadeh, 2012). Another of these affective variables in foreign language anxiety (FLA) which, as Worde (1998) discussed is a serious problem in foreign and second language classrooms. Anxiety may be experienced by thirty to fifty per cent of students. Foreign language classroom anxiety has been identified as distinguishable from other forms of anxiety and has been supposed to have damaging effects on the acquisition of and performance in a foreign language (Worde, 1998).

Foreign Language Anxiety

Anxiety is defined by Spielberger (1983) as a "subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of autonomic nervous system" (p. 15). Additionally, Abu-Rabia (2004) defined anxiety as "fear, panic, and worry" (p. 711). Anxiety is usually split into three different types: (1). Trait anxiety, which is a personality trait (Eysenck, 1979). (2). State anxiety, which is apprehension experienced at a moment in time, and (3). Situational anxiety, which is anxiety experienced in a well-defined situation (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). A feeling of nervousness associated with language learning is language anxiety (LA). MacIntyre (1999) specifically defined language anxiety as "the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language" (p. 27). According to Abu-Rabia (2004), "the foreign language learner characterized as having anxiety is usually worried, physically insecure, and unable to engage in situational learning" (p. 712). Second and foreign language investigators and linguists have long been trying to associate anxiety with language learning, in general, as well as in the classroom setting (Azher et al., 2010). The anxiety experienced in a classroom is called foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) (Horwitz et al., 1986). Horwitz (1986) referred to FLCA as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 131). Horwitz and Cope (1986) considered FLCA to be a situational anxiety rather than a trait anxiety which learners experience in the well-defined situation of a foreign language classroom.

In terms of the different stages of the language learning process, specifically in a classroom situation, Williams and Andrade (2008) discussed these stages as input, processing (mental planning), and output. The input and processing stages are concerned with the worries,

confusions, and thinking process of the learners when they are asked to participate in the classroom whereas the output stage is concerned with the actual response of the learners. Researchers have identified the effects of LA on each of these stages as well. Additionally, other researchers in their studies have also investigated the effect of induced anxiety during each of these stages (Bailey et al., 2000), and recently, a growing body of researchers and theorists have been working on foreign language classroom anxiety in relation to the learners' achievement as well as the sources of anxiety (Bailey et al., 2000; Cheng, 2001; Horwitz et al., 1986). Many researchers have agreed that FLA affects students' attitudes and their achievement in language learning. Although anxiety may sometimes be a facilitating factor, in most cases, it negatively affects learners' achievement and has debilitating effects on students' learning. Zheng (2008) asserted that a language learning experience could become a traumatic experience and may deeply affect one's self-esteem or self-confidence. In fact, anxiety has been believed to negatively affect achievement in the second language learning (Aida, 1994). It is true that FLCA affects learners' achievement, but it does not work in isolation. Many other factors contribute to a learner's language acquisition.

According to Horwitz et al (1991), possible causes of FLCA are communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Researchers like Aida (1994) have emphasized the importance of the teacher-student relationship on the level of learners' anxiety levels. Young (1991) reviewed literature and summarized six possible sources of second language anxiety: (1) personal and interpersonal issues, (2) instructor-learner interactions, (3) classroom procedures, (4) language testing, (5) instructor beliefs about language learning, and (6) learner beliefs about language learning. Additionally, Chan and Wu (2004) emphasized that "In addition to task difficulty, factors, such as teachers' attitude and evaluation, teacher-student

interactions in class, parents' expectations, classmates' attitudes, students' own achievements are the potential sources of students' foreign language anxiety" (p. 290).

In other words, FLA has many sources; some may be associated with the student, and others with the teacher, the methodology, or the instructional practice. Anxiety may also originate in low self-esteem, specious beliefs regarding language learning, negative experiences associated with the foreign language or culture, or the general experience of language learning (Worde, 1998). Apart from these factors, anxiety is also correlated with age (Bailey et al., 2000), motivation (Yan & Horwitz, 2008), and emotional intelligence (Awan et al., 2009).

Motivation

In the last few decades, motivation has been the center of discussions and research in language learning (Chung, 2013). Motivation has mainly concerned the direction and magnitude of behavior, which, according to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2001) is responsible for why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to endure the activity, and how hard they are going to pursue it. Motivation in second language acquisition is defined as the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language (Gardner et al., 1985). These arguments indicate the complexity of motivation as well as its role in language learning. Essentially, motivation may include determinants that affect the quality or achievements of students. For example, Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2002) asserted that student motivation, which can be conceived of as a multifaceted construct with different components, is a decisive enabler for academic success. Saville-Troike (2006) pointed out that students who are more motivated are able to learn a new language better.

According to Ag et al. (2016), the dichotomy of language learners based on the self-determination theory (Noels et al., 2000; Vallerand et al., 2008) seems important in determining the reasons for learning another language. A well-known dichotomy of motivation in general education is intrinsic motivation vs. extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation refers to behaviors an individual performs to receive some extrinsic reward, (e.g., learning English in order to get a better job), while intrinsic motivation refers to behaviors whose rewards are internal (e.g., the joy of learning English). Ag et al. (2016) continued by mentioning that another dichotomy which is also repeatedly used when establishing the reasons for learning a language is instrumental versus integrative motivation, which can be traced back to a study by Gardner and Lambert in 1959 (see also Gardner, 2000; Kissau, et al., 2010). Gardner and Lambert (1959) established that instrumental motivation as the reasons for learning a foreign language reflects the more utilitarian value of linguistic achievement. This type of motivation is a synonym with extrinsic motivation, which is related to rewards as external to language learning. Different from instrumental motivation, for which the rewards are external to the activity, integrative motivation refers to internal reasons for language learning. This type of motivation refers to an individual's willingness and interest in having social interaction with members of the L2 group (Gardner & Lambert, 1959). Gardner and Lambert (1959) stated that with integrative motivation language learners learn another language because they want to learn more about the language group. Ag et al. (2016) explained that motivational orientations in learning a foreign language may change. Kormos and Scizer (2014) affirmed that in the era of globalization, English has become a lingua franca. Kormos and Scizer (2014) also argued that in the era of globalization the rationale for learning the target language has become separated from its native speakers and their cultures. Many studies show that learners have an interest, including interest in foreign or international

affairs, a willingness to go overseas to study or work, and a readiness to interact with people from different cultures (Kormos & Scizer, 2014). International orientation as a language motivation factor has been shown to exist in the study conducted by Ag et al. (2016), and further it may actually be a replacement for integrative motivation, which is frequently interpreted as interest in the native speakers of English. International orientation seems to have become a part of language learning motivation during the era of globalization (Lamb, 2004; Lamb & Wedell, 2014).

Oldfather (1995) conducted a four-year study and found that the dominance of teacher-centered approaches and fewer opportunities for student self-expression were two major factors influencing students' motivation for learning. Awan et al. (2010) asserted that it has always been difficult for students to learn English in circumstances where they are in contact with the language only in a teacher centered-classroom which means that the teachers take over the classroom and students hardly ever get any chances to practice English. Their studies have also determined that such conditions make it difficult for the students to take an avid interest in the language learning process. Many students, when asked to perform in a foreign language, become anxious and find it difficult to speak fluently. Ushida's (2005) research results indicated that teachers can be influential in affecting students' motivation and attitudes and in creating a learning community in which students can study a language with less anxiety, confirming the connection between these variables.

Gardner and MacIntyre (1992, 1993) claimed that individual-difference variables (e.g., cognitive variables and affective variables), influenced by antecedent factors (i.e., biological factors such as age and experiential factors such as previous language training experience),

interact with both formal and informal language acquisition contexts and influence both linguistic and nonlinguistic outcomes.

Age

As previously stated, age plays a role in language learning. According to Lightbown and Spada (2013), all second language learners, regardless of age, have already acquired at least one language. This prior knowledge may be an advantage in the sense that they have an idea of how languages work. On the one hand, knowledge of other languages can lead learners to make incorrect guesses about how the second language works, and this may result in errors that first language learners would not make. Lightbown and Spada (2013) mentioned that young language learners start the mission of first language acquisition without the cognitive maturity that older second language learners have. Although young second language learners have begun to develop these characteristics, they will still have far to go in these areas, as well as in the area of world knowledge, before they reach the levels already attained by adults and adolescents. On the other hand, the results of a research study conducted by Bećirović and Hurić-Bećirović (2017) demonstrated a significant relationship between age and motivation. The ten-year-olds had the highest motivation for learning English as a second language, while the eighteen-year-olds had the lowest motivation for learning English as a second language. The ten-year-olds also scored the highest in learning English as a second language. Moreover, Bećirović and Hurić-Bećirović's results (2017) also showed a significant correlation between achievement and motivation. The age factor represents a special importance and influences both the motivation and the ability to acquire a second language. Many professors believe that the key factor influencing the learning of a language is the age of students. However, it is important to highlight that many scholars rely

on the theory of a critical period, which affirms that after a certain period foreign language cannot be acquired in its entireness (Hurford, 1991).

In their book *How Languages are Learned*, Lightbown and Spada (2013) explained that the innatist perspective is often linked to the critical period hypothesis. This hypothesis stated that animals, including humans, are genetically programmed to acquire certain kinds of knowledge and skills at specific times in life; beyond those 'critical periods', it is either difficult or impossible to acquire those abilities.

According to Muñoz (2008), the influence of age in learning has been analyzed mainly in reference to the outcomes of the learning process or ultimate attainment. Indeed, as Long (2007) argued, as mentioned in Bowles (2007), the explanation of age-related outcome differences is an issue of fundamental importance for L2 theory construction. In contrast, the influence of the learner's age on the rate of learning has not enjoyed the same type of attention, although it has been widely attested (Snow & Hoefnagel-Höhle 1978). Additionally, Muñoz (2008) emphasized that the issue of age may be even more crucial when the time for learning is limited, as is the case in a foreign language learning setting. The Critical Period Hypothesis claims that natural language acquisition is available to young children, but it is limited in older adolescents and adults.

The conclusions of Krashen et al. (1979) on the basis of the early findings on the influence of age on L2 learning were: (i) older children, adolescents, and adults generally make more rapid progress in the first stages of the L2 acquisition process than younger children, and (ii) the younger a L2 learner is when the L2 acquisition process begins, the more successful that process will be, that is, the more likely s/he will be to attain nativelike proficiency. The latter generalization has related the younger starters' higher ultimate attainment to the native speaker

standard in the framework of the CPH as it applies to L2 acquisition. Along those lines, an early start in naturalistic L2 acquisition has been considered successful because of its association to nativelikeness. Implicit in this consideration is that the aim of L2 acquisition is to achieve a level of performance as similar as possible to that of a native speaker, idealized by formal linguistic theories as a monolingual native speaker (Krashen et.al., 1979).

According to Nikolov and Djigunovic (2006), the acquisition of implicit competence was affected by age in two ways: (1) biologically, the plasticity of the procedural memory for language gradually decreases after about age 5; and (2) cognitively, a reliance on conscious declarative memory increases both for learning in general and for learning a language from about the age of 7. The Critical Period can be "masked to some extent by compensatory mechanisms. To the extent that proficient L2 is sub served by declarative memory, like vocabulary, it is not susceptible to the CP" (Paradis, 2004, p. 60).

Birdsong (2006) mentioned that volume of the brain decreases with age and that this process begins after the age of twenty. However, aging affects the ability to learn, not only language, but also other content and includes the acquisition of other skills and competencies as well (Sinanović & Bećirović, 2016). Based on recent studies, Nikolov and Djigunovic (2006) concluded that native ultimate attainment is available to a number of adults who started learning the target language after puberty. As a result, the strong version of the CPH cannot be maintained any longer. Nikolov and Djigunovic's (2006) conclusions indicated that in order to set realistic goals for early learners, it is essential to consider what level learners in bilingual education achieve, and how long it takes them to develop native-like proficiency in a L2. Nikolov and Djigunovic's (2006) research evidence showed that five to seven years are needed, depending on the educational programs, to achieve grade level norms in academic subjects taught in English

(Wong Fillmore, 1998) and a recent longitudinal study found that young children had strong accents after four years of enrollment in English-medium schools indicating that native accent is not automatically available (Flege et al., 2006).

Self-esteem

In his book *Self-esteem and Foreign Language Learning*, Rubio (2021) stated that at this moment in language teaching history, the role of affective variables and the necessity of focusing on the emotional states of learners are readily acknowledged by the language teaching community. As Rubio's (2021) volume clearly attested, this understanding of the emotional vulnerability of language learners is shared by many language teachers and researchers around the world.

Learners feelings of self-esteem may also benefit from more realistic goals for language learners. Rubio (2021) felt that language programs err by making native-like competence the goal for their students. Blyth (1995) wrote that language professionals should look to functioning bilinguals within various language communities as models for language learners rather than to native-speakers. Blyth (1995) emphasized that by re-envisioning language teaching in this way, students will see more value in their language studies, and that learners will come to understand that less than perfect competence can thus see themselves as more competent language learners. When learners compare themselves and are compared to native speakers, they will inevitably come up short. Such comparisons, in turn, likely contribute to poor self-esteem (Blyth, 1995). When learners subscribe to common overly perfectionistic beliefs about language learning, they may erroneously interpret their progress as abnormally slow and conclude that they lack aptitude for language learning (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002; Horwitz, 1988).

Conclusion

Along with listening, writing, and reading, speaking is part of the four pillars of learning English. However, many ELLs have expressed that they feel it is their weakest skill, or at least the one that creates the most fear or anxiety to them. Accordingly, different researchers, such as Gardner & Lambert (1959), have long studied barriers to speech ability, such as anxiety, motivation, self-esteem, and age. Even though some literature has investigated these barriers mentioned, very little of it focuses on Latin American students. Accordingly, the aim of this project is to generate ideas for lesson plans and activities that can help to overcome these barriers where Latin American students are concerned, as most of the research focuses on Asian countries, like China, Thailand, Indonesia, and Bangladesh.

Teachers should nonetheless continue to look broadly for suggestions and ideas to try to eliminate the barriers that affect their students' learning. The relative lack of concrete solutions aimed at the group of people I intend to teach propelled me to use previous knowledge on the specific characteristics of that group of learners to adapt the lessons to their particular needs. A critical area of focus within these lessons is to lower students' levels of anxiety and therein help them to communicate in English.

Chapter Three: Project Design

In this chapter, I intend to explain the rationale behind creating lesson plans that include activities to help students overcome the barriers that affect their speaking ability. Teachers can use these lesson plans to complement their writing, reading, and listening tasks, but most importantly, students can benefit from these activities because speaking is normally not favored inside the classroom.

For example, Awan et al. (2010) asserted that it has always been a problem for most students to learn English well in an atmosphere where they are in contact with the language only in a teacher-centered classroom, which means that the teachers dominate the class increasing teacher's talking time but drastically diminishing students' talking time; as a result, ELLs get few chances to practice the language. The past research studies have also determined that such environment makes it difficult for the students to get interested in the language learning process. Many students, when asked to perform in a foreign language, become anxious and find it difficult to speak fluently.

There are characteristics of formal foreign language learning that have the potential for provoking anxiety in learners. For instance, language learning anxiety has been attributed to the inability to present one's ideas and opinions as well as one can in the target language, which can undermine self-esteem and threaten one's self-image (Horwitz et al., 1986 as cited in Williams & Andrade, 2008). In addition, the inability to pronounce words correctly or use correct grammar can lead to negative evaluation (real or perceived) by others. Moreover, confusion and

embarrassment may result from the inability to comprehend spoken and written input. These types of anxiety contribute to making formal foreign language learning a particularly unpleasant experience for many learners (Horwitz & Young, 1991; Horwitz, 2001; Young, 1999 as cited in Williams & Andrade, 2008). In the same way anxiety affects a student's ability to speak, motivation plays an important role in learning a foreign language.

Motivation is, without question, the most complex and challenging issue faced by English language teachers today (Schiedekr & Freeman, 2015). Motivation is a key contributing factor for L2 learning (Cheng & Dornyei, 2007 as cited in Wadho et al., 2016). It is an established fact that no motivation means no learning. Motivation comes from different sources. One of the most important sources of motivation is teachers. Teachers spend a lot of time with their students and are followed as a role model. Teachers and parents are believed to be influencing forces for learners' motivation (Schiedekr & Freeman, 2015). Schiedekr and Freeman (2015) have also mentioned that the teacher is more important to the education of his or her students than pedagogy, technology, curriculum, facilities, and textbooks.

There are plenty of types of motivation (Akbarov & Aydoğan, 2018). Extrinsic motivation to learn reflects the role of external control in self-regulation, that is, the influence of recognition, praise, and material rewards on one's learning process and outcomes (Ryan & Deci 2000). Intrinsic motivation to learn refers to participating in mastering a school/university subject because it is an activity that is inherently enjoyable and interesting (Deci & Ryan 1985). There are also the integrative and instrumental dimensions of motivation. The first one is somewhere between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation whereas the second one can be considered a subtype of extrinsic motivation. In EFL/ESL terms, the integrative motivation is about positive feelings and attitudes toward a specific culture which language we want to learn (Dörnyei &

Ushoda, 2012 as cited in Akbarov & Aydoğan, 2018). Instrumental motivation of learning a foreign (e.g., English) language is linked to goal-directed behavior where that foreign language does not serve as an aim per se, but to achieve some other aims and goals (Dörnyei & Ushoda, 2012 as cited in Akbarov & Aydoğan, 2018). Dörnyei (1994) has claimed that motivation to learn a foreign language should be regarded as an interaction between the language level (that is, the impact of integrative and instrumental functions of language on its learning and mastering), the learning situation level (social relations between foreign language teachers and students along with their interaction with course materials), and the learner level (learners' reactions to a particular foreign language and social situation within which it is learned).

Foreign language anxiety, motivation, and self-esteem directly affect ELLs' ability to communicate orally. Schiedekr and Freeman (2015) have mentioned that it must also be assumed that every teacher could fill their students' needs to some degree. This project has that intention precisely: to help both teachers and students. By showing teachers lesson plans that include activities and tasks that are designed to lower their students' anxiety while increasing their motivation, students will be directly benefitted. The activities in these lesson plans do not require a lot of material or resources, the emphasis is made on the students' production. Speaking in a foreign language can be intimidating, which is why students need lots of practice in class. Practicing with topics students know a lot about, teachers forgetting about correcting mistakes all the time, being patient, keeping students' needs in mind, etc. These, and other, suggestions can be found in these lesson plans.

Chapter Four: The Project

        This project consists of lesson plans that have been created to help ELLs speak more. These lesson plans include a combination of skills: listening, reading, writing, but most importantly, speaking. The context of these lesson plans is Business English. After graduating from college, most of the students I teach in my hometown in Mexico start or keep working for international companies located in the city, such as NISSAN, Continental, Sensata Technologies, Mercedes Benz, Infinity, Marelli, Tachi-S, Jatco, etc. to mention just a few. These lesson plans intend to center on the students' need to diminish anxiety while increasing their talking time, which will provide more confidence and motivation. Speaking out loud in front of other people—especially in a second language—can be nerve-wracking for anyone. According to Wickham, R. (n.d.), young people and children are often less inhibited than adults, so when teaching English speaking lessons to adults, there are some things that teachers need to keep in mind:

1. Adults, from any cultural background, still like to have fun, but their idea of what is fun may be different from the teacher's.

2. Adults are likely to be more sensitive to the need for dignity and will not want to feel embarrassed in front of others, so teachers should plan their lessons accordingly, always respecting the student's self-esteem.

3. Teachers should observe signs of discomfort or even distress in some students when planning classroom interactions. For example, in some cultures pairing men and women is not a good idea.

4. Teachers should be flexible when arranging the class, without necessarily letting students become lazy and work with their same favorite partners every time and remember that just because they are teaching adults, it does not mean that they necessarily have advanced language skills.

5. Teachers should avoid linking reading skills too closely to speaking skills, because some students may be having difficulties with reading (especially if teachers are working in a country with refugees, for example).

Business English Lesson Plan #1: Job interviews

Teacher: Erudiel Bernal.

Level: Advanced intermediate.

Time: 50 minutes.

Objectives: Students will practice question formation.

Students will role play job interviews.

Resources: Board, markers, handout, projector (in case there is not one, easel pads)

Outcomes: List of possible interview questions and answers. Dictation of a text. An interview with a famous person. Questions and answers included.

Anticipated problems: Some students may have no experience with job interviews.

Stage 1. Warm up.

Write "Job interview" on the board. Ask students how many job interviews they have had in their lives. Elicit typical interview questions and write them on the board.

Stage 2. Controlled practice.

I. Ask students to write three difficult questions that they have been asked (or could be asked in the future) in their worksheet.

II. As soon as they have finished, have students work in pairs to discuss their questions and potential answers. Write the best answers.

III. Ask one student to read the instructions for Exercise three. Ask another student to repeat what they have to do. Clarify if necessary (teacher can also ask a student to do this).

IV. Ask students to use the link in their handout. They will find information about the STAR method.

Go over the answers with the whole class.

V. Have a student read the instructions for Exercise five. Another student should repeat the instructions in their own words.

VI. Reading activity (Running Dictation Game).

Divide the class into two groups: A and B. Each student A must work with a student B.

Students A sit turning their back to the screen. Students B need to stand up and come closer to the screen.

Show the first part of the glassdoor.com website (Mission and values). Students B read the sentences and run (or power walk) back to where their partner A is. They dictate as much as they can remember. If they forget some of the information, they can run back to where the text is projected, then come back to where their partner is and keep dictating.

NOTE: Students who are dictating cannot take pictures or notes.

Students A need to write the dictation in their handout (Exercise six).

After 5 minutes, students change places.

Teacher needs to project the second part of glassdoor.com website (About Glassdoor) to students can start reading it and dictating it to their partner.

Stage 3. Extra speaking practice.

Have students work in pairs.

Students choose one famous person they want to interview for a job position. It can be anybody of their choice. The celebrity they choose can be either living or dead.

Ask students to choose someone they **know** or admire a lot so they will have more material to talk about when the speaking part of the activity comes around.

Elicit verbs students have been learning/studying/reviewing. Write them on the board. For example:

Decide   Work   Love   Offer   Prefer   Perform

Take over   Continue   Cancel   Lay off   Consider   Change

Each student has to choose five verbs from the list on the board.

Give students five minutes to make a different question using one of their five verbs in each question. These questions are made for the person they want to interview.

Remind them: One question, one verb.

For example, a student chooses Angela Merkel. He/She has to write five questions for Angela Merkel, each question using a different verb from their list.

For example:

1. How did you **decide** you want to become a chancellor?

2. Did you want to **continue** being President of the European Council after your term finished?

3. What did you **love** the most about being the President of the European Council?

4. If you had to change 3 things, what would you **change** about Germany or the EU?

5. What do you **consider** to be your greatest victory as President of the European Council?

Go through the class and help students fix some grammar mistakes in case there are any.

The students then give their partner the questions that they wrote and then adopt/acquire the role of the person they wanted to interview. That is, the student who chose Angela Merkel has "to be" her. Their partner asks them the questions they just made.

Each student answers the questions from the perspective of the person they wanted to interview, as their partner asks them the questions.

After both interviews are over, students report to the rest of the class the name of the person their partner chose and how they answered to the questions.

Handout for lesson plan # 1: Job Interviews

Name of the student: _____ Date: _____

I. Write down three interview questions that you could find / have found difficult to answer.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

II. Work in pairs. Take turns to ask an answer your interview questions. Then, you need to come to an agreement and write down the best answers.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

III. Think about a job interview you had. Remember as much as you can. Describe what happened.

_____

_____

_____.

IV. Use the STAR Method. Go to this link: https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/how-to-prepare-for-a-behavioral-interview. *Scan the article. What do the letters S, T, A, and R stand for?*

S _____   T_____   A_____   R_____

What is the definition of the STAR method? Scan the article again, if necessary, to find the answer.

Write it in your own words.

_____

_____

_____ .

V. Work in pairs. Read your answer for exercise three above to your partner. Together, discuss and identify the elements of the STAR method. Underline and label them.

VI. Listen to your partner. He/She is going to quickly dictate several sentences to you. Write them down.

VII. Once the running dictation is over, read the website (About us tab) again. Work in pairs. Find words that match these definitions.

1. Organization or enterprise; it is a location where someone labors for their employer.

   _____

2. A person who is applying or postulating for a job. _____

3. The existing state of affairs, especially in terms of social or political affairs. _____

4. Imaginative, ingenious, inventive. _____

5. The person who guides or commands a group, organization, country, etc. _____

Business English Lesson Plan #2: Giving a presentation

Teacher: Erudiel Bernal.

Level: Advanced intermediate.

Time: 50 minutes.

Objectives: To identify the characteristics of a good and bad presentation.

To introduce vocabulary related to presentations.

To review sentence stress and intonation patterns for effective presentations.

Resources: Handout, boar, markers, projector, Chromebooks or laptops.

Outcomes: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to give a sales presentation about their companies' new product.

Anticipated problems: Students may not be able to mention 'great speakers'. Therefore, the teacher will suggest people such as Barak Obama, Michelle Obama, Kamala Harris, Steve Jobs, etc.

Students may find it difficult to use proper intonation in certain phrases (teachers must be aware that intonation changes from culture to culture). The intonation problem can be solved by teacher demonstration and drilling.

Stage 1. Warm up.

I. *Have students work in pairs to discuss and answer the following questions:*

1.What are the characteristics of a great speech or presentation?

2.Who are the greatest speakers that you can think of? Mention one or two.

3.Who do **you** need to give presentations to as a part of **your** job? What are the presentations about?

Once students have finished discussing in pairs, have entire class feedback making special emphasis on the characteristics of a good speech. Write them on the board. (Expected answers to be elicited: eye contact, clear voice, positive body language, etc.).

Stage 2. Controlled practice.

II. In their handout, students will next see a chart. They have to mention their five most commonly used phrases or expressions. They can be as short and simple as a "Hi, there" or longer, such as a "What do you think?", "Does it make any sense to you", etc. Ask students to also include five words or phrases suitable for presentations, for example: "Hello and thank you all for coming." or "Hello everyone, I'm delighted to be speaking with you today". Once they have finished, ask them to think about five different emotions: anger, tiredness, joy, etc.

III. Have students work in pairs in order to fill in the blanks of the text. After students have completed this activity, go over the answers with the whole group to clarify any vocabulary words students were unsure of. Ask two or three students to read the text.

The teacher will read the text twice. He/she will ask the students to listen carefully and identify the differences. The first time, the teacher will purposedly read it using sentence stress (stressing content words: nouns, main verbs, adjectives, adverbs), intonation and tone of voice. The second time, he/she will read it in a monotone voice.

After reading the text, ask the students to tell you which version would be more effective when giving a presentation. Expected answer: the first one.

IV. Look for the video titled "Killer Presentation Skills" by J Douglas Jefferys within YouTube. Play the video. Ask students to pay careful attention to the content. Ask students to write down five presentation skills mentioned in the video.

Once the video is over, have students count themselves from one to five. Ask all the ones, twos, threes, fours, and fives to get together.

Give each group a question. They have to talk about it. Each group needs to have a speaker who will share a summary to the rest of the class once time is up.

Each question emphasizes the importance of each point, for example:

1. Why is making your audience comfortable important when giving a presentation?

2. Why is eye contact important when giving a presentation?

3. Why is pausing important when giving a presentation?

4. Why is body language important when giving a presentation?

5. Why is effective content important when giving a presentation?

V. Look for the video titled "Steve Jobs iPhone 2007 Presentation (HD)" within YouTube. Play it. Ask students to pay careful attention to answer the questions in their handout.

VI. Tell students that they are going to create a presentation, similar to the one they watched Steve Jobs' video, to sell a product of their choice. The product must be something they are fully familiar with because they will not have much time to research. Encourage students to choose the main product their employer/company makes, assembles, distributes, etc.

For example, NISSAN employees can "sell" a car; JATCO employees can "sell" their best car CVT transmission; Continental employees can "sell" electronic control units (ECU) or door control units (DCU); etc.

NOTE: If there are two students who work for the same company and they want to work in pairs, allow students to do so. Just remind them they must have the exact amount of speaking time.

Students need to include these in their presentations:

- introduction, overview, summary, and close

-vocabulary (adjectives and phrases) to describe the product

-body language, gestures and intonation

Each student, pair, or small group presents.

Have different small groups give feedback regarding their classmate's presentation (both good and bad) and what they need to work on for a real-life sales presentation scenario.

_____

Stage 3. Extra speaking practice.

Playing PechaKucha.

PechaKucha originated in Tokyo in 2003 and roughly translates as "chitchat". Teacher can also show a website or videos on YouTube before having students work on their PechaKucha.

Students can have a lot of fun speaking while giving a presentation to the class. Using images in presentations can be helpful for shy students (images take away some of the attention away from the speaker).

The PechaKucha style of presentation adds interest with each student being allowed to show 20 slides only for 20 seconds each (the timing being controlled by the software so that the slides change automatically) or whatever time limit teachers choose. The teacher can adapt it to their class' needs. For example: make it 10 sides for 15 seconds each, or the teacher could also add rules such as "no more than four words on each slide" (or "no words at all") so that students must really talk and not just read the slides.

Hint for teachers: how to make a PechaKucha presentation in 20 seconds?

Command + A on a Mac or Control + A on a PC to select all the 20 slides, Transitions -> uncheck the box of On Mouse Click, check the box of After, then put 20 seconds; This will enable the slides advance automatically in 20 seconds.

Handout for lesson plan # 2: Giving presentations

Name of the student: _____ Date: _____

I. *Read and answer these questions.*

1. What are the characteristics of a great speech or presentation?

2. Who are the greatest speakers that you can think of? Mention one or two.

3. Who do **you** need to give presentations to as a part of **your** job? What are the presentations about?

II. *Look at this chart. Fill in your 5 most commonly used phrases or words, for example: "Hi, there", "What do you think?", or "Does it make any sense to you". Also include 5 words or phrases suitable for presentations, for example: "Hello and thank you all for coming." or "Hello everyone, I'm delighted to be speaking with you today".*

Once you have written the ten phrases, think about different emotions and feelings. Write one per column.

Feeling or emotion / Phrases or words					
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					

III. Complete the following presentation speech using the words below.

after that	**finally**	**illustrate**	**outline**
to start with	**then**	**describe**	**specifically**
purpose	**sum up**	**thank**	**tell you**

Good afternoon, everyone. I hope you are all doing well today. I would like to _____ you all for being here. We are all here today to _____ about our latest product, and more _____ about how it works and what it does. I would also like to _____ the features of the product and _____ inform you about where you can get it and how. _____, I would like to shortly _____ our current marketing policy in our state, North Carolina. _____, I will _____ some of the problems we have run into in our market share. _____, I will _____ our progress this year and continue on with our main _____ for being here, the product.

IV. Pay attention to the video and write down at least five presentation skills the speaker mentions.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Pay attention to the presentation in this video. Answer the questions.

1. Which of the presentation skills described in the first video did you see in this other video? Mention at least three.

2. What makes Steve Jobs' iPhone 2007 launch speech successful?

3. What specific words did Steve Jobs use or repeat in his presentation that you think supported him in describing/promoting his product better?

4. How does he keep the audience engaged?

Business English Lesson Plan #3: Marketing

Teacher: Erudiel Bernal.

Level: Advanced intermediate.

Time: 50 minutes.

Objectives: Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of Marketing.

Resources: Projector, board, markers, worksheet.

Outcomes: Different speaking products, such an Elevator Speech.

Anticipated problems: Students may not have a favorite commercial (many people just fast

forward these days)

_____

Stage 1. Warm up.

Ask students to work in pairs and share with their partner what their favorite ad or commercial is

(on TV or YouTube, for example).

Ask them to mention, in their personal opinion, what characteristics the best TV ads have.

_____

Stage 2. Controlled practice.

Tell students that they are going to listen to the first 25 seconds of a TV commercial. Tell them

that they are NOT going to see any pictures, just listen.

Find the video "OPI - INSTINCT OF COLOR" by Opi France within YouTube. Play the video.

Have students work in pairs to discuss answer the questions.

Ask some students to share the answers they discussed with their partners.

Explain them that they are going to listen to some more of the advertisement (again, emphasize

that it will be without seeing the ad).

Ask them to discuss the same 3 questions + a new one.

Tell them that they are going to watch almost the rest of the ad.

Stage 3. Extra speaking practice.

Adult and Business version of Show and Tell combined with Elevator Speech.

Students can be asked to bring to school an object to show and tell about, if they forgot to bring something, they can quickly take out something they already have: a wallet, a pen, a keychain, a bill, jewelry, etc.

Students have to talk about/describe their object trying to convince the rest of the class why this is the best item to purchase. They have only one minute to convince as many "buyers" as possible.

One extra idea:

Create a Debate.

Once students have talked and presented their objects, have students work in pairs. They have to stand their ground to convince one another why their object is more necessary than the other student's. For example: one student trying to convince his/her classmate why a credit card is more necessary than a gold ring and vice versa.

Once the mini debates are over, have some volunteers present in front of the class. Students vote for the winner of each pair.

Handout for lesson plan # 3: Marketing

Name of the student: _____ Date: _____

I.   **Work in pairs (or small groups) and discuss these questions.**

1. What is your favorite advertisement (on TV/on YouTube/etc.)? Describe it.

2. What characteristics do the best TV advertisements have?

II.   **You are going to listen to the first 25 seconds of a TV advertisement without seeing the pictures. Discuss the answers in a small group or pair.**

1. In your opinion, what product is being advertised?

2. Who is the target customer?

3. Brand identity distinguishes any brand in consumers' minds. Netflix and Coca Cola are two great examples. Based on what you are hearing, what does the music in this ad say about the brand identity?

III.   **Now, you are going to listen to some more of the advertisement. (again, without seeing the ad).**

1. Discuss the same 3 questions above.

2. Has your opinion changed?

IV.   **Now, you will watch almost the whole advert.**

1. What do you think is being advertised?

2. Even if you do not know the product, who is the target customer? What makes you think that? Be specific.

3. Are men included in the target customer group?

V.   **Now, watch the advert to the very end. (2:00 2:26)**

1. Does this brand appeal to you as a customer/consumer?

2. Has the ad put OPI in your consideration set?

3. What does the ad portray about the price of the product? Is it a premium brand or an economy brand?

4. Which socio-economic categories are the advertisers targeting?

5. Which market segment is being targeted in terms of profession, lifestyle and age group?

Read the word bank and text below. Fill in the blanks (1 word is NOT needed).

brand identity	**consumer**	**brand image**	**premium brand**	**target market**
customer	**brand loyalty**	**social demographic**		**must-have item**
psychological pricing				

This latest piece of promotion from the OPI brand is undeniably compelling. The

_____ they are trying to put across to the buying public is definitely that they

are cool, contemporary and high-quality. Does that identity equate to the _____? I

think the answer would be a definite "yes". Every person that I have shown this has been super

impressed with the creativity, images, music and the slow reveal of the product.

Is OPI the market leader? I am afraid that my knowledge of nail products is not good enough to

know, but the large marketing budget would suggest that this is a _____ with

pricing to match, rather than an economy brand. It is also an amazing ad because it appeals to a

far larger customer base than just the _____ alone. Nail varnish typically

would be aimed at females, but this campaign is ticking all the right boxes for brand awareness

for all those boyfriends and husbands out there. OK, they are not going to be the

_____, but the males who have seen this ad would certainly have OPI in their

consideration set (possibly the only product in their brand consideration). For existing female

customers, it works extremely well serving to cement _____ (Brennan, B., 2013).

Business English Lesson Plan #4: A big *What if*

Teacher: Erudiel Bernal.

Level: Advanced intermediate.

Time: 50 minutes.

Objectives: Students will remember the structure of the conditionals. They will also be able to practice mixing them correctly.

Resources: Handouts, Taboo cards, projector, computer, board, markers.

Outcomes: Students will be evaluated in their grammar (conditionals) online. They will write their own Taboo cards which will show their logical thinking and creativity.

Anticipated problems:

Students may need more help structuring their conditional sentences.

Stage 1. Warm up.

Write the question "What would make your professional life perfect?" on the board. Give students 5 minutes to mention three things to the person sitting next to them.

When you ask them to report what their classmates said, they need to use this structure written on the board:

_____ said that he/she would need to have/be/possess _____if he/she had the perfect professional life.

Have at least three pairs share their findings.

Look for the video titled "What if... Official Trailer" by Pure Flix within YouTube.

Have students pay attention to the trailer and pause it to ask them questions, such as:

What would have happened if he had gotten married to his old girlfriend years ago?

What would the main character in the movie need to do if he wanted to straighten up his life?

Ask them if second chances really exist in life.

Do they get second chances at their jobs?

Stage 2. Controlled practice.

Have students count themselves from one to four. Ones and ones sit together, twos and twos, and so on. Give each pair the corresponding Conditional: Zero, First, Second, or Third. Each team will be in charge of creating a presentation to help the rest of the class remember the structure of conditionals.

If students need some help, ask them to use online tools and websites, such as:

Speak up by Magoosh (https://magoosh.com/english-speaking/the-four-types-of-conditionals-and-how-to-use-them/)

Perfect English grammar (https://www.perfect-english-grammar.com/conditionals.html)

IV. Taboo game.

Show students some Taboo cards. Do not mention the name of the game. Ask if anyone recognizes what the cards are. If they do, ask them to explain what it is and how it is played. Then, ask them to tell you what they think the greatest inventions or discoveries in history have been. Expected answers: fire, electricity, airplanes, cars, e-commerce, etc.

Divide the students in two: A and B.

A students get together with other A students. B students do the same. They work in pairs. They have empty Taboo cards. They only have the concept. They need to think about the clues that are not possible to be used in the descriptions once the game starts.

Collect the cards from the teams and start playing the game. (One A student chooses a pack of Taboo cards from group B. He/She needs to say anything but the words in the card. Remember: no mimic, no sounds, no pointing is allowed)

All of the words in the Taboo cards are considered the greatest invention in history.

As a follow up, ask students to answer the questions in their handouts.

_____

Stage 3. Extra speaking practice.

*This is a twist of the Fishbowl method.

Have students stand up and form an inner and outer circle facing each other.

Students in the outer circle have these questions:

1. What is your best skill? How would your life be different if you had never learned it?

2. What is the best piece of advice someone ever told you? How would your life be different if that person had shared that piece of advice with you?

Students in the inner circle are the ones who move to their left after they have answered the question.

Now, the students in the inner circle ask the questions and the students in the outer circle move to the right once they have answered the questions:

1. What was the best the best decision that you have ever made professionally?

What would have happened if you had made a different decision instead?

2. What was the best the best decision that you have ever made in your personal life?

What would have happened if you had made a different decision instead?

*Would you rather…?

There are websites such as: https://jimmyesl.com/would-you-rather-questions where you can find many "Would you rather…? questions. These are perfect to be asked and answered in pairs, small groups, or the entire class, which gives students even more opportunities to keep practicing their speaking while having fun.

*Moral dilemmas

Give the students the beginning of a 2nd conditional question involving a difficult business moral dilemma, for example: "If you knew your best friend had lied on his CV when he got a job at your father's company, would you…?" Students have to complete the last part of the sentence by telling the answer directly to the person who asked.

Ask them to think about two different answers. Ask them to predict which of the two options someone else in the class may choose. Finally, they ask that person to check.

Handout for lesson plan # 4: A big *What if*

Name of the student: _____ Date:

_____

I.   Fill in the blanks with the correct option: zero, first, second, or third.

1. The _____ conditional expresses a future scenario that might occur. Assuming that

    the condition is fulfilled, the outcome is likely to happen.

2. The _____ conditional can either refer to future hypotheticals that are unlikely to

    be true or present situations that are untrue or impossible.

3. The _____ conditional expresses an unreal situation in the past, with reference to

    the hypothetical outcome that would result also in the past.

4. The _____ conditional expresses something that is considered to be a universal

    truth or when one action always follows another.

II.   Look at the sentence structures below. Which of the four conditionals do they show?

    Match the columns.

a) If + past perfect... would + have + past participle	( ) Zero conditional
b) If + past simple ... would + infinitive	( ) First conditional
c) If + present simple ... will + infinitive	( ) Second conditional
d) If + present simple ... present simple	( ) Third conditional

III.   Practice the conditional sentences online.

Link 1: https://www.perfect-english-grammar.com/conditional-exercises.html

Link 2: https://www.ego4u.com/en/cram-up/tests/conditional-sentences-3

IV.   What if..?

1. What would we be doing if Thomas Alva Edison had never discovered electricity?

2. What would you do if you did not have a cell phone?

3. What would be the consequences in your company if the assembly line did not exist?

4. What would Coca Cola have to do if mass production did not exist?

5. How big would computers still be if there were no integrated circuits?

Taboo cards

A.

The Internet	The wheel	The light bulb
_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____

The telephone	The internal combustion engine	Integrated circuit
_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____

B.

Cell phone	Assembly line	Electricity
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Mass production	Electric car	Penicilin
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Business English Lesson Plan #5: SMART goals

Teacher: Erudiel Bernal.

Level: Advanced intermediate.

Time: 50 minutes.

Objectives: Students will know the definition, use and structure of a SMART goal. They will go over different companies' goals to see if they are achievable or not. Students will apply this goal structure to their own workplace and/or life.

Resources: Handout, markers, board, computer, projector, YouTube videos.

Outcomes: The students will know how to use SMART goals which can help them set professional and personal objectives.

Anticipated problems: Some websites may not show their goals at first sight and students may need to dig in to find that information which may be time consuming.

Stage 1. Warm up.

Show a picture of a hangman on the board (the game, of course). Ask if anyone recognizes what it is. When a student says he/she does, ask him/her to explain the rules of the game. Allow other students to contribute if necessary.

Create a hangman game online (different free online resources) or draw the lines on the board with a marker. Teacher can even select a moderator for this game to increase STT.

The words for this game are (students guess one a time): Specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound.

Once the word is guessed write it and leave it on the board. Write the letters A, R, T, S, and M on the board. Ask students to describe "Acronym". They also need to provide an example.

Expected answer: an abbreviation that is formed from the initial letters of other words and pronounced as a word. Examples: NASA, PIN, LASER, etc.

Ask students to form an acronym with the five initials of the words they just guessed. Expected answer: SMART.

Stage 2. Controlled practice.

Ask students to read the examples of how to go from broad goals to SMART goals. (Another twist to this activity, to boost speaking, would be to print and cut the broad goal from the smart goal. Students would have to work in pairs and match the broad goal to the SMART goal).

Ask students to work in pairs. They have to read the five goals in their handout (exercise III) and write the initials S, M, A, R, T in the parentheses after discussing what each broken up goal is.

Show students CNBC videos found in YouTube. (There is a series of videos on the falling on some companies, such as: Ford, SEARS, PizzaHut, etc.). Choose the one that adapts to your objectives, topic, or needs better.

Play the video titled "Ford's Fight To Remain An American Icon" within YouTube. Ask them to pay attention to key words like technology, reputation, loans, consumer shift, high-priced SUVs, invest in short term, etc. and write them in the board.

Ask them to work in groups (depending on the number of concepts written on the board). They are going to play the role of the CEO and others important decision makers in the company. They are going to be assigned one of the concepts written on the board and write a SMART goal. Then, separate the groups. Each member works with members of other teams to listen to the SMART goals they came up with to solve FORD's problems.

Ask students to work in pairs again. Show students companies' websites. For example, NISSAN, JATCO, etc. These websites show the company's 2022, 2023, etc. goals.

Each pair gets a different company. Students have to go over the website or page. Read the company's goals and rewrite them in the SMART way, but they need to include two truths and three lies (or vice versa). Once the students have finished writing their SMART goals, they work with another person. This person needs to point the false information out.

Students can practice phrases like:

"In my opinion…"

"I think…."

Etc.

If the guess is correct, the person who wrote the goal repeats or emphasizes the information (by asking follow up questions).

Stage 3. Extra speaking practice.

Each student needs to write a SMART goal thinking about their English classes. They share it in small groups, then, ask for volunteers to share them with the rest of the class.

Handout for lesson plan # 5: SMART goals

Name of the student: _____ Date: _____

I. Use this link: https://www.thebalancesmb.com/elements-of-a-smart-business-goal-2951530**.**

Read the definitions of SMART goals. Then, match the columns.

1. Goals should be challenging yet achievable not impossible and hence disappointing.	( ) **S**
2. Goals should have a target time attached to them to keep motivated alive.	( ) **M**
3. Goals should be quantifiable in some aspect so that progress can be tracked.	( ) **A**
4. Goals should not be vague and obscure but rather clear and concise.	( ) **R**
5. Goals should add value upon achievement and align with some other goals you have.	( ) **T**

I.   Use these two links:

a) https://stevens-tate.com/articles/5-smart-goal-examples/

b) https://www.thebalancesmb.com/smart-goal-examples-2951827

Read these articles carefully. They will show you how to transform broad or simple Business goals into SMART goals.

II. **Work in pairs. Read these five simple business goals and their SMART goals version. Write the letters S, M, A, R, or T in the parentheses.**

1. Simple goal: I want to grow my business.

SMART goal: I will obtain 20 new clients (_____) for my custom socks (_____) within three months (_____) by launching a social media influencer marketing campaign and offering special discounts (_____). This will allow me to grow my business and increase my revenue (_____).

2. Simple goal: I want to reduce staff absences.

SMART goal: To meet the practice goal (_____) of a 30% reduction in staff absences (_____) by the end of the year (_____), management will apply a new reward system and more flexible working schedule (_____), with attendance results tracked every month (_____).

3. Simple goal: I want to increase sales.

SMART goal: To meet the sales objective of booking $120,000 in orders (_____), six additional salespeople will be hired (_____) to grow sales of (specific) by 6% in the first quarter, 12% in the second, 16% in the third and 25% in the fourth (_____and _____).

4. Simple goal: I want to improve product quality.

SMART goal: To meet the company's yearly goal (_____) of reducing defects to less than 3% of shipped product (_____), a new test and inspection procedure (_____) will reduce the shipping of torn socks by 14% per quarter (_____), with data tracked weekly (_____).

5. Simple goal: I want to save money.

SMART goal: I want to raise $60,000 (_____) worth of business capital to start my own custom socks startup (_____) so that I can quit regular employment (_____) by saving $12,000 a year from my salary (achievable) for the next four years (_____).

II.   Write your SMART goal for FORD.

V. Work in pairs. Listen to your teacher's instructions. After reading a company's goals, rewrite them using the SMART version, but include three true and two false (or vice versa) goals.

Business English Lesson Plan #6: Telephone English

Teacher: Erudiel Bernal.

Level: Advanced intermediate.

Time: 50 minutes.

Objectives: Students will review and learn new phone phrases they can use in more formal setting. They will review phrasal verbs.

Resources: Handout, projector, marker, board, YouTube videos.

Outcomes: Formal phone conversations.

Anticipated problems: Students may not have a phone to use that day. They may refuse to let other students know their personal phone number.

Stage 1. Warm up.

Find the video "Jimmy and the Avengers Play Telephone" by Jimmy Kimmel Live within YouTube.

Play the video without sound. Ask students to tell you what they see. Then, play it again to confirm if their guess was correct.

Ask them to tell you the rules of the game. Ask them to stand up, form two lines (or three, or one big circle, it all depends on the number of students you have that day).

Find Broken Telephone ideas online, good suggestions can be found here:

https://shadypinesstorytown.com/2018/08/19/play-your-own-game-of-telephone/ or

https://hobbylark.com/party-games/telephone-game-phrases

Communicate today's topic to students: Telephone English.

Stage 2. Controlled practice.

Give students a handout. Ask them to work on exercise I. Once they are finished, go over the answers. Answers can be checked by having one student ask a question and another answering it.

Find useful videos on YouTube. For example:

1) TELEPHONE ENGLISH | How To Sound Professional On The Phone | Business English Lesson by English Like A Native

2) English Phone Conversation: How to Start and End by Rachel's English

3) Talking on the Phone in English - English Phone Vocabulary Lesson by Oxford Online English

The one being used today is #1. Play the video and have students answer the questions. Go over the answers.

Then, ask students to complete exercise III. To check the answers, ask students to see the phrase at the bottom of the handout. Ask eight different students to provide the answer by using the model phrase.

Students role play the phone conversations on these websites:

https://www.englishclub.com/speaking/telephone-practice-appointments.htm

https://www.englishclub.com/speaking/telephone-practice-messages.htm

https://www.englishclub.com/speaking/telephone-practice-ordering.htm

Go over the pronunciation by projecting the conversations and having two students read that loud.

Stage 3. Extra speaking practice.

To practice a phrase in a more mechanical/repetitive but fun way:

Give Student A a reason to call Customer Support. Student B takes the call, and then connects

Student A with another department (Sales, Technical Assistance, Finance, Human Resources,

etc.) Student C then connects A with D and so on. Student A must repeat the reason for calling

every time.

Prepare cards with different scenarios, for example:

Person calling.	Person answering.
You are calling your supervisor James Blackwelder to tell him that you will be 30 minutes late for work today. Your car broke down and you must take the bus or find a taxi.	You are the receptionist at the company where James Blackwelder works.

But for this activity, students MUST use a real phone and work from two different places,

student A stays in the classroom, student B will be in the hallway, media center, back yard, etc.

Handout for lesson plan # 6: Telephone English

Name of the student: _____ Date: _____

I.   Use this link: https://www.thoughtco.com/telephone-english-practice-exercises-1210233
Read it carefully and answer these questions:

1. What English grammar tense should you use to state why you are calling or to make an
    excuse for someone who cannot take a call?

    _____

2. What modal verbs should you use to make requests on the telephone (asking to leave a
    message, for example)? _____

3. What phrase (***This is*** or ***This is*** _____***speaking***) should you use to introduce yourself on
    the telephone? _____

4. What phrase (***This is*** or ***This is*** _____***speaking***) should you use if someone asks for you
    and you are on the phone? _____ (Beare, K. 2018)

II.   Pay attention to the video. Answer the questions.

Talking on the phone can be stressful because you are removing important communication
elements such as _____, and you must rely
on your _____.

1. What are the three options you have when you answer the phone in a working environment?
    _____
    _____
    _____

2. When should you introduce yourself using your full name?
_____

3. Which are your choices if you are making the call and you DO NOT know exactly who you
need to speak to?

    _____
    _____
    _____

4. What are the five elements you will most likely need to give in case you need to leave a message?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Write the meaning of these phrasal verbs used in telephone conversations

1.	Hold on	_____	6. Hang up	_____
2.	Hang on	_____	7. Call back	_____
3.	Put through	_____	8. Pick up	_____
4.	Get through	_____	9. Get off	_____

III.   Match the columns. (Telephone phrase – Action/use). Write the number in the parenthesis.

1. Thanks. It's Judy Smith and my number is 704 345 6912.   (   ) To make a request

2. Let me repeat that just to make sure. It's Judy Smith at   (   ) To ask to speak with
    704 345 6912?   someone

3. Would you mind spelling that for me?   (   ) To connect someone

4. All of our staff are busy at this time. Please hold for the (   ) To leave a message
    next available person.

5. May I speak to Mr. McDonald in the purchase   (   ) To answer the phone
    department, please?

6. Hello Linda. This is Enrique from New Asian Cars dealer.   (   ) To confirm a message

7. Latte Coffee Company. Miriam speaking. What can I do   (   ) To take a message
    for you, Daniel?

8. She is in a meeting right now. Can she call you back when   (   ) To introduce yourself
    she is free?

To _____, you may say: "_____".

Business English Lesson Plan #7: Money, money, money

Teacher: Erudiel Bernal.

Level: Advanced intermediate.

Time: 50 minutes.

Objectives: Students will share their preferences in terms of payment methods. They will also discuss, investigate, and debate on the most convenient way to pay.

Resources: Handout, board, markers, projector, YouTube videos, realia (a bill, a credit card, and a debit card)

Outcomes: A debate. A contrast diagram (pros vs cons)

Anticipated problems: Paying methods may be so different that students will not come to an agreement easily.

Stage 1. Warm up.

Show students a credit card, a debit card and cash. Ask them to describe what they see and what the use of it is.

Ask them to tell you how they would rank them according to their preference. Model my personal preference by sharing my ranking: 1) debit, 2) cash, 3) credit.

Show them pictures of different ways we have to make payments today:

debit and credit cards, charge cards, prepaid cards, bank transfers, digital wallets, phone and mobile payments, checks, money orders, cryptocurrencies, and cash, and ask them to tell you the name of them.

Stage 2. Controlled practice.

Look for the next three videos within YouTube in this particular order:

1. The Power Of Going Cashless Means Real Pain For Some | NBC Nightly News by NBC News

2. What does a cashless future mean? | The Economist by The Economist

3. What China's nearly cashless society looks like by CBS This Morning

Have students pay attention to the videos and answer the questions.

Have students work in small groups or pairs to go over the answers.

Have students work in pairs and assign a payment method. They need to think about its pros and cons. Have them complete this part of the handout (exercise II).

Once they have finished researching and thinking about the pros and cons, split the pairs to form two big groups. Each big group splits in two: one inner and one outer circle. They start "defending" their method of payment.

Stage 3. Extra speaking practice.

The price is right game.

Give students some interesting trivia that includes numbers.

Have students turn those numbers into questions to have their partner guess the numbers, e.g. "How much did the renovations at the Singapore Changi airport cost in us dollars"? (they 1.25 billion). After each guess, Student A tells their partner if the real answer is higher or lower, until the student who is guessing finally get to exactly the right amount.

Handout for lesson plan # 7: Money, money, money

Name of the student: _____ Date: _____

I.   Watch the videos and answer the questions.

1. What would happen to families or people who do not have access to credit/debit cards or who operate on cash only?

2. What do you think could happen to people who do not have a smart phone? What sector in society would be mostly affected because of this?

3. Would people without technology or a line of credit become the new segregated group of today's society?

4. Watch the second video. Answer the questions.

5. Who wants faster and easier ways of payment?

6. What would happen if a country were no longer democratic, and its inhabitants were mostly using electronic payment?

7. According to the speaker, homeless people do not carry a terminal so they would be directly impacted by the movement to a cashless society.

8. What other people can you think of would be also directly hit by this movement? Mention at least 5.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Now, watch a third and last video. After watching it, go back to your answers for question six above.

1. Did you see any of the people or situations you mentioned in the video? How did your opinion change?

II. **Work in pairs. Investigate these aspects about the payment method you were assigned: convenience, control, security, speed, and cost.**

Write its Pros and Cons. They are going to help you in the Debate activity later.

Method of payment assigned: _____	
PROS	**CONS**

Business English Lesson Plan #8: Graphs and diagrams

Teacher: Erudiel Bernal.

Level: Advanced intermediate.

Time: 50 minutes.

Objectives: Students will be able to describe the components of graphs and diagrams. They will also be able to summarize information about graphs and diagrams.

Resources: "Pizza" printed and cut, color pencils, markers, board.

Outcomes: Illustrations of different graphs and diagrams.

Anticipated problems: There might not be enough time to discuss all kinds of graphs and diagrams.

Stage 1. Warm up.

Reverse the strategy:

Have students work in pairs. Give them a concept or vocabulary word. Have students search for two images that represent that concept in some way and create a Venn diagram that compares their images.

Stage 2. Controlled practice.

Divide the students in small groups.

Assign each group a different graph or diagram (Ishikawa, Marimekko, Flow chart, Bar, Line, or Column chart).

Cut a circle (cardboard, plain paper, etc.) into slices to make it look like a pizza.

Each member of every team is assigned a different aspect of the graph or diagram: definition, uses, elements, instructions (how to use it), example or illustration.

Each student is in charge of investigating and decorating their slice with the correct information.

After some minutes, the pizza is reassembled as the students share their information with the rest of the groups and class.

Students work with their original team members. They need to create a list of "10 things you did not know about _____ graph (or diagram)".

Once they have finished investigating (for example, the name of the first person who created the diagram, its original use, what company uses it the most, etc.), form new groups.

The new groups need to have a student from every other team. Taking turns, students need to share their lists with the members of the other teams, so that at the end of the class, everyone know a bit more about different graphs and diagrams.

_____

Stage 3. Extra speaking practice.

My personal graph.

Have students describe some real data about themselves, (for example, their grades in the last two quarters, the average number of hours of sleep this week, height, English level, etc.). Their partner needs to listen to draw the graph.

Once the graph or diagram is finished, the student who did it tries to guess what it represents.

** Give students are given charts and graphs. They need to study the graphs to extract specific information such as developing trends, product sales in different regions, etc. Once they have finished analyzing the charts, the students can give a presentation to the class defining what they have found.

Business English Lesson Plan #9: A good and a bad boss

Teacher: Erudiel Bernal.

Level: Advanced intermediate.

Time: 50 minutes.

Objectives: Students will be able to identify, define and use vocabulary to describe the characteristics of a good boss.

Resources: Paper, color pencil, board, markers.

Outcomes: Discussion on the characteristics of a good boss.

Anticipated problems: There might be students working for the same company, and their relationship to or with their boss might be different and get too personal.

_____

Stage 1. Warm up.

Have students work in pairs. Write these questions on the board: "What are the five best qualities that a good manager should have? Why?"

Give students some time to write a list of adjectives or concepts to describe a good manager.

_____

Stage 2. Controlled practice.

Ask students to remember who was the best manager they have had.

Ask them about the qualities that this person had.

Students will tell the rest of the group about some of the good things this person did while he or she was their manager, but they need to tell three sentences that are true and one that is false.

Students form a conga line to change partners and talk to more people in the classroom.

The listener needs to discover which the false sentence is.

Ask students to work in pairs. They are going to think about, and draw, the best Frank-boss-tein, by:

* the positive qualities every manager should have.

* specific things that good managers do.

* specific things that good managers avoid doing.

* five worst qualities for a manager to have.

Have students work with other pairs so they can listen to each other's ideas.

Have students present not their own, but somebody else's Frank-boss-tein.

_____

Stage 3. Extra speaking practice.

Adapt board games such as: "Guess who". Use students sentences (the ones that include true and false information). Have other students find out who the best boss would be if they had to choose one based on these sentences. They have to explain why.

Business English Lesson Plan #10: Sharky Tanky

Teacher: Erudiel Bernal.

Level: Advanced intermediate.

Time: 50 minutes.

Objectives: Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of business vocabulary.

Resources: TV, projector, videos, paper, board, markers.

Outcomes: Project or improvement plans; business ideas.

Anticipated problems: Some business ideas might not be realistic.

Stage 1. Warm up.

Ask students to discover an animal (a shark) by asking you YES/No questions only. For

example: "Does it live in the jungle?", "Is it herbivore?", etc.

Only answer YES or NO and have students guess: A shark.

Ask them: "What does a shark have anything to do with business?"

Anticipated answer: Shark tank.

Ask a student to describe what Shark Tank is.

Stage 2. Controlled practice.

Play a video (find it in YouTube) about the most successful and the worst cases on the show.

Ask students to discuss in pairs or small groups why they think some were successful, but others

were not.

Once they have finished discussing, they have to change groups and share their opinions.

Stage 3. Extra speaking practice.

Divide students into two teams: investors and creators.

Creators have to come up with a new product or (encourage students to do this one better) an improvement in their ow companies.

Give creators enough time to come up with a good quality project.

Talk to investors: give them a limited amount of money (Monopoly bills can work) and explain that they have to give an amount of money to each project. The amount of money depends on practicality, good idea, business opportunity, improvement, and quality of the project.

Once the creators finish, each group presents their project to the investors. The investors get together for a couple of minutes to discuss how much money they will give to the project and why.

At the then, after every group has presented, the team with the most money, wins.

Chapter Five: Conclusions

Speaking English is important and necessary when people are trying to communicate their ideas quickly. From personal experience, I have seen job advertisements in my city's newspapers or social media, and they emphasize this specific ability over the others, but, ironically, it is precisely the weakest ability ELLs claim to have. I normally use the gym metaphor telling my students that their bodies would not look balanced if they only trained their upper muscles, never their legs, or their chest and back. I compare that unbalanced routine to learning English. ELLs should look for an equilibrium in their language abilities. In other words, they need to have a strong speaking ability along with listening, reading, and writing. Unfortunately, students do not get enough time to practice inside the classroom, nor do they have an opportunity to use their English outside of it.

Before writing this thesis, I did not even know there was a name for this situation many of my students were going through. The struggle was real, but I believed ELLs were just trying to find an excuse to stay quiet, avoiding any participation in class. I certainly knew that outside the classroom students would find a reduced number of opportunities to speak English, so I was trying to make them see the class was their only space to develop this ability; however, I could not force them to speak.

For this reason, I thought writing my thesis on this topic was a good idea. The idea was to help my students, and other teachers as well, to be able to communicate effectively in their target language. As a result of that idea, I started reading about the possible reasons why students

refused to speak. Anxiety was the answer. Lack of motivation, low self-esteem, and age, among others, are also barriers that need to be overcome if we want to help our students speak English.

On the one hand, I was happy I could finally have a name for that situation that had been present in my classes for many years. On the other hand, very little, or no research at all, has been conducted in Latin America. Most of the research focuses on students from other continents, more specifically Asia. Based on that research, I created a series of lesson plans as part of my project.

The project I designed, includes lesson plans with activities and suggestions to help both teachers and, most importantly, students. The intent of the suggestions is for teachers to see that anxiety can interfere with students' ability to speak. These suggestions include simple recommendations that any teacher can adopt in their classrooms. For example, have students read the instructions instead of the teacher doing it all the time. These suggestions do not require any technology or drastic changes in a teacher's classroom, but in the end, every detail adds up. When students have more opportunities to speak, their anxiety level goes down and their motivation increases – it is a win-win situation.

As I mentioned before, most of the research has been conducted with Asian students; therefore, the ideas I used in my lesson plans are adapted to the Mexican context. I kept my former students in mind to think about their particular needs and I connected the material to my students' lives. As a result, the activities in the lesson plans seem to be only focused on a certain topic, but I would like teachers who see these lesson plans realize that practically any topic can be transformed into an opportunity to speak. I would like to see my project considered as a model or as an example that teachers can customize their classes and transform them into chances that will allow students to speak more English.

It is teachers who directly see what their students' needs and personalities are like, and we are always in the look out for more ideas to make our classes interesting, interactive, and fun. These ideas are not just copied from one place and pasted onto another. Teachers adapt them to their particular environment. I hope that this project and investigation help teachers see that we should try to do whatever is in our hands to help our students overcome the barriers that impede them from speaking English.

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